Application No: 10/669,751
Attorney Docket: 1-23415

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims, without prejudice or disclaimer, as presented below.

1. (currently amended) A actuator ~~In combination~~ comprising:

a motor;

an actuator member operatively connected to the motor for moving the actuator member in an extended direction and a retracted direction; and

an assist mechanism comprising an assist element that is adapted to store energy to assist in moving the actuator member, the assist element ~~is~~ being carried between two abutment members that act upon the assist element to cause the assist element to store energy when the actuator member is moved in ~~an~~ the extended direction and ~~releases~~ release the energy when the actuator member is moved in ~~a~~ the retracted direction opposite to the extended direction.

2. (currently amended) The actuator ~~combination~~ according to claim 1, further including an outer tube from which the actuator member extends, the assist element being carried by the outer tube.

3. (currently amended) The actuator ~~combination~~ according to claim ~~2~~ 1, wherein the ~~members acting upon the assist element are abutment members~~ actuator is an electromechanical linear actuator and the motor is a reversible electric motor.

4. (currently amended) The actuator ~~combination~~ according to claim ~~3~~ 2, wherein one of the abutment members is a fixed abutment member that is maintained in a fixed position and the other abutment member is a movable abutment member that is adapted to move responsive to movement of the actuator member.

5. (currently amended) The actuator ~~combination~~ according to claim 4, wherein the fixed abutment member is fixed relative to the outer tube and the movable abutment member is movable relative to the outer tube.

6. (currently amended) The actuator ~~combination~~ according to claim 5, wherein the assist element is a spring, whereby upon extending the actuator member, the movable abutment member is moved to cause the spring to be compressed to store energy and upon retracting the actuator member, the movable abutment member is free to move to permit the spring to release the energy.

7. (currently amended) The actuator ~~combination~~ according to claim 2, wherein the ~~members acting upon the assist element are~~ abutment members ~~including~~ include a clamp fixed relative to the outer tube and a collar guide movable relative to the outer tube, the assist element being a helical compression spring located between the clamp and the collar guide.

8. (currently amended) The actuator ~~combination~~ according to claim 1, wherein the abutment members ~~acting upon the assist element~~ include a movable abutment member that is adapted for movement by forming a connection between the actuator member and the movable abutment member.

9. (currently amended) The actuator ~~combination~~ according to claim 8, wherein the connection between the actuator member and the movable abutment member includes one or more connection members that extend between the actuator member and the movable abutment member.

10. (currently amended) The actuator ~~combination~~ according to claim 9, wherein the one or more connection members ~~are~~ comprise one or more cable assemblies comprising a cable having opposite ends including a fixed end and a movable end, the fixed end being fixed relative to the actuator member and the movable end being adapted to move and operatively engage the movable abutment member.

11. (currently amended) The actuator ~~combination~~ according to claim 10, wherein a clevis is fixed to the actuator member, the fixed end being attached to the clevis so that the cable extends from the clevis beyond the abutment ~~member~~ members.

12. (currently amended) The actuator ~~combination~~ according to claim 10, wherein ~~the members acting upon the assist element include a fixed abutment member and a movable abutment member,~~ each of the abutment members ~~being~~ is provided with one or more guides through which the cables pass.

13. (currently amended) The actuator ~~combination~~ according to claim 10, wherein the cables, upon retracting the actuator member beyond a certain distance, extend beyond the movable abutment member.

14. (currently amended) The actuator ~~combination~~ according to claim 13, further including a stop member to limit travel of the movable abutment member when the actuator member is retracted so that the cables extend beyond the movable abutment member.

15. (currently amended) The actuator ~~combination~~ according to claim 14, further including an outer tube from which the actuator member extends, the stop member being an O-ring on the outer tube.

16-20. (withdrawn)